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withstanding its diminution. For suppose eight hundred millions of paper dollars to be worth two hundred in silver, and suppose the government to withdraw two hundred millions of paper from circulation; then but fifty millions of silver will take their place. In this case no change occurs in the sum of the circulating medium, because fifty millions of silver are equal to two hundred in paper. Here is the true cause, why the great sacrifices of the Austrian, Russian, and other governments have nowhere had the anticipated effect. Lastly, the operation is *wasteful*, because the money expended for raising the value of paper is totally and uselessly lost, and the nation gains only a new burthen of interest. That it fails in effecting a rise is even fortunate, for otherwise a new revolution in private fortunes would accompany the millions of a thus created useless public debt.

In addition to the topics above discussed, Mr Von Jakob dwells at large on all the important sources from which public revenue is usually derived. On the subject of managing the mint, he recommends that government should totally abstain not only from all profits, but even from deducting the expenses of coining, as in England; and he also advances good reasons for entrusting the coinage of money under proper restrictions to individuals. He speaks of the organisation of post office establishments, public loans from banks and otherwise, providing for public defence by conscription and militia, and such other objects as immediately affect the revenue and disbursements of a nation. All his discussions are marked by liberal and extended views of political science, not less than by compass of learning, strength of argument, and depth of thought.

ART. X.—*Letters to the Hon. William Prescott, LL.D., on the Free Schools of New England, with Remarks upon the Principles of Instruction.* By JAMES G. CARTER. 8vo. pp. 123. Boston. Cummings, Hilliard, and Co. 1824.

THE principal subject of this pamphlet, the free schools of Massachusetts, is of great and growing importance. It is, at this moment, exciting much inquiry, and will, we think, be yet more carefully discussed hereafter, than it can be at present. We are much gratified, therefore, to receive at this

moment, Mr Carter's letters, because they are evidently written by a person, who possesses a practical and familiar acquaintance with the management of the free schools of New England, and has besides taken more than common pains to collect such notices of their history, and such general information concerning them, as may best serve to illustrate their past condition as well as the circumstances in which they now stand. We are besides much gratified with Mr Carter's discussion, because we consider the free schools of New England as the basis of what is most valuable in New England's character ; because, we think, they have been so from the very planting of these colonies ; and because we fully believe that, if there be anything on which, under the favor of Heaven, New England may safely rely to preserve and raise its moral and intellectual condition for the future, it is on these same free schools, encouraged, enlarged, and strengthened to meet the growing and increasing wants of its population.

Mr Carter begins with a notice of what was done for free schools in the earliest period of our history, first by the laws of the Colony, and afterwards by the laws of the Province of Massachusetts Bay ; and then comes to the practical condition of the schools as they now exist under the provisions of our own constitution. We do not know anywhere else so simple and exact a statement of the modes, in which the common reading and writing schools of the interior, not only of Massachusetts, but of all New England, are managed, as in the following passage.

‘ New England possesses some peculiar advantages for carrying into effect its system of education. It is divided into small townships or separate corporations of from five to seven miles square. The responsibility of these small corporations is more likely to ensure a more vigilant discharge of their duty, than if they were larger, and the subject of their responsibility less immediately under their inspection. As the population is scattered over almost the whole territory, and the children are often young, who attend the primary schools, it has been found convenient to divide each town into smaller districts for this object. Thus a school is carried to the door, or at least into the neighborhood of every family. Each township constitutes from four to twelve districts ; and none are so far removed from all the schools, that an attendance on some of them is not easy. The appropriations for schooling in each town are adequate to support a school in each district, from three to six

months in the year, and often longer. The money is raised by a tax on the *property* of the town, principally, a very small proportion arising from the *polls*. It is distributed among the districts, sometimes, in proportion to what each pays of the tax ; but oftener, a more republican principle prevails, and it is divided according to the number of scholars. There is one other principle of distribution, which is sometimes adopted, in those towns not satisfied with either of the above methods. That is, they divide the money raised as above among the districts, in the compound ratio of the number of scholars and the tax paid in such district. But this requires so much mathematics, that even those who acknowledge the justness of the principle, commonly content themselves to do less justice, and spare their heads the trouble of calculation.

‘ These appropriations are expended, a part in the summer months for the advantage of the younger children, and a part in the winter months for the accommodation of those, who are more advanced in age, and whose labor cannot be spared by their poor and industrious parents. The summer schools are taught by females ; and children of both sexes, of from four to ten years attend, females often much older. In these schools from twenty to forty, and sometimes twice that number of children, are taught reading, spelling, and English grammar, by a single instructress. In the more improved of this class of schools, writing, arithmetic, and geography are added to their usual studies. In the leisure time between lessons, the female part of the school are devoted to the various branches of needlework. These primary schools, however humble the branches taught, and young the children, to whom they are taught, have a strong influence in forming the characters of the young. Although the progress in studies may be inconsiderable, yet they are important for the notions of order, decency, and good manners, which they inculcate ; and for the habits of attention and industry, which are there formed. The whole expense of a school of this kind, taught by a female, exclusive of the house, which in the country costs but a trifle, does not exceed from two to three dollars per week. For this very inconsiderable sum, thirty, forty, or fifty children, are not only kept from idleness and consequent depravity, but are taught much, which will be useful to them in life. In the winter months an instructor is employed, and arithmetic, geography, and history, are added to the studies of the summer schools. These schools bring together for instruction those children and youth, whose labor is too valuable to be dispensed with, in the season which gives the agriculturist most employment. The total expense of a school of this kind amounts to from six to ten dollars per week ; and it contains from thirty to eighty, or a hundred scholars.’ pp. 29—32.

After this Mr Carter speaks of the law passed by the legislature of Massachusetts, in January of the present year, empowering any town containing less than five thousand inhabitants to refuse to keep a grammar school, which, in the language of our laws means a school, where the Latin and Greek can be taught, and boys prepared for admission to our colleges. This law Mr Carter shows to be singularly unhappy in its operation, as its tendency is to reduce the general tone of intellectual improvement throughout the commonwealth, and particularly to place an early and insurmountable obstacle in the way of those gifted children of the poor, who among us have so often risen to the highest places of the state, through the means offered them by our public schools. On this very interesting part of his subject we cannot refuse ourselves the pleasure of citing Mr Webster's admirable remarks in the Convention of 1821, as given by Mr Carter himself.

‘If there is any one cause,’ says Mr Carter, ‘which has contributed more than others, to produce that remarkable degree of happiness and contentment, which pervade all classes of the people in New England, that cause is the successful operation of the system of Free Schools. The basis of the system is, that the property of *all*, without distinction, shall be applied to the education of *all*. The principle and its operation were thus eloquently described by Mr Webster, in the late convention for revising the constitution of Massachusetts. “For the purpose of public instruction, we hold every man subject to taxation, in proportion to his property, and we look not to the question, whether he himself have, or have not, children to be benefitted by the education for which he pays. We regard it as a wise and liberal system of police, by which property, and life, and the peace of society are secured. We seek to prevent, in some measure, the extension of the penal code, by inspiring a salutary and conservative principle of virtue and of knowledge in an early age. We hope to excite a feeling of respectability, and a sense of character, by enlarging the capacity, and increasing the sphere of intellectual enjoyment. By general instruction we seek, as far as possible, to purify the whole moral atmosphere; to keep good sentiments uppermost, and to turn the strong current of feeling and opinion, as well as the censures of the law, and the denunciations of religion, against immorality and crime. We hope for a security, beyond the law, and above the law, in the prevalence of enlightened and well principled moral sentiment. We hope to continue, and to prolong the time, when, in the villages and farm

houses of New England, there may be undisturbed sleep, within unbarred doors. And knowing that our government rests directly on the public will, that we may preserve it, we endeavor to give a safe and proper direction to that public will. We do not, indeed, expect all men to be philosophers, or statesmen ; but we confidently trust, and our expectation of the duration of our system of government rests on that trust, that by the diffusion of general knowledge, and good and virtuous sentiments, the political fabric may be secure, as well against open violence and overthrow, as against the slow but sure undermining of licentiousness.

“ I rejoice, that every man in this community may call all property his own, so far as he has occasion for it, to furnish for himself and his children the blessings of religious instruction and the elements of knowledge. This celestial, and this earthly light, he is entitled to, by the fundamental laws. It is every poor man’s undoubted birthright, it is the great blessing, which this constitution has secured to him, it is his solace in life, and it may well be his consolation in death, that his country stands pledged, by the faith, which it has plighted to all its citizens, to protect his children from ignorance, barbarism, and vice.” pp. 48—50.

The remainder of Mr Carter’s pamphlet is devoted to the inquiry, how the public free schools can be improved and made more useful. This, he thinks, can be done by selecting the teachers from among persons whose success in life shall be identified with their success in this occupation, which is now rarely the case ; and by introducing the principles of inductive logic into all the different branches of education. This last point he illustrates much at large by examples of inductive teaching in the languages, in geography, and in arithmetic ; the last, as exhibited in Mr Colburn’s recent valuable publications, which are there very thoroughly analysed and examined.

We do not propose to follow Mr Carter into this portion of his inquiries. He has managed it as he has the whole, with much ability and a thorough knowledge of the ground he occupies, and of the objects he wishes to attain ; and we commend it, as we do the entire pamphlet, to the careful attention of all who are interested in the vast subject of free schools, for Mr Carter is evidently a person whose inquiries, experience, and reflections give him a claim to be heard with respect and confidence.

We wish, however, to offer a few hints, chiefly taken from Mr Carter’s pamphlet, on the course of legislation in Massa-

chusetts concerning Free Schools, and its probable effects, thinking the present an important crisis in the history of popular education throughout the country.

The earliest trace of a free school, intended for universal education, has escaped Mr Carter's diligence; but it is so honorable a testimony to the character of our ancestors, that we must be permitted to produce it. It is found in the Records of the Town of Boston, vol. i. p. 3, under date of the thirteenth of the second month, 1635, and provides, 'that our brother Philemon Pormont shall be entreated to become schoolmaster for the teaching and nurturing of youth among us.' That he served only a short time, if at all, is probable, because at the end of the same volume of Records, with the date of August 1636, is a curious memorandum of subscriptions 'towards the maintenance of a free schoolmaster, for Mr Daniel Maude being now also chosen thereto.' So that within five years from the first peopling of the peninsula of Boston, when the rudest wants of its inhabitants were yet very imperfectly satisfied, a school was established among them, apparently under the auspices of John Winthrop, the first governor of the colony, for the purpose of promoting universal instruction. And this is the foundation of the free schools and the popular education of New England.

In 1647, free schools became a matter of legislation in the colony of Massachusetts Bay, and by a law then passed, 'to the end' as its preamble sets forth 'that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers' it is ordered that every township with fifty families shall provide a school, where children may be taught to read and write; and that every township of one hundred families shall provide a *grammar* school, where youth can be fitted for the university; to which another law was added in 1683, providing that every township with more than five hundred families should maintain two grammar schools and two writing schools; a burthen, which, considering the feeble means of the colony, and the dark period when it was assumed, was no doubt vastly greater, than any similar burthen that has been borne since; and, when compared with the present wealth of the state, greater than any one of its civil expenses.

It is a singular fact, too, that no legal requisitions made since have, even in name and form, come up to this noble

standard established by our poor and suffering forefathers in the middle of the seventeenth century. The charter of William and Mary having rendered a new law expedient, an act was passed by the Province in 1692, containing provisions similar to that of 1647; but omitting the requisition made in 1683 on towns of five hundred families to maintain two grammar schools and two writing schools. A still greater falling off followed the settlement of the constitution of 1780, though that constitution solemnly recognised the duty of cherishing the grammar schools, for by the act of 1789, towns of fifty families are required to support a reading and writing school only six months in the year instead of twelve as before, and towns of two hundred families are required to have a grammar school, instead of towns of one hundred as before. And finally, by the act of February 18, 1824, any town may refuse to have a grammar school, whose inhabitants fall short of five thousand; or, in other words, no town in Massachusetts, except five or six, is now required to furnish the higher branches of a common education to all its children.

We confess that we regard this course of legislation on the subject of free schools with much regret. The laws have been continually diminishing their requisitions, until, at last, these requisitions are altogether nominal; until in fact they are made where they are not wanted, and omitted where they are. A moment's consideration will render this statement plain. All the towns of Massachusetts, except Boston, Salem, Newburyport, and two or three others, can exempt themselves from having schools for any other purposes, than to teach 'orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, and good behavior.' Now both the compulsory provisions of this law are useless. There was no need of requiring the towns of Massachusetts to preserve their English schools, for as Mr Carter happily observes, 'the laws for the support of the *primary* free schools, have never been executed upon a niggardly and parsimonious construction. The public mind upon this subject has gone much before the laws. They have followed at a large distance rather than stimulated and controlled any interest. The towns have, in many instances, made appropriations for the primary schools of twice the sums of money necessary to answer the letter of the law.' In the case of the large towns the requi-

sition is yet less needed. They already do ten and twenty times more than is asked of them. Boston, for instance could fairly fulfil the requisitions of this law by a tax of *three thousand dollars* ; but, Boston actually spent *seventyfour thousand dollars* last year on its free schools, and will spend *seventy-eight* this year. But, while its requisitions are thus idle, the effect of the law in reducing the tone of education, by allowing grammar schools to be generally abolished, is apparent. The smaller towns have no longer any motive to employ well taught instructors; legislative authority in no way supports education, because the people do more already than is now required of them; and the consequence, that the schools must fall off, seems inevitable.

The reason why the legislature of Massachusetts has thus discouraged the increase and improvement of the grammar schools is, we apprehend, to be found in a general impression, that the grammar schools are a burthen imposed on the poor for the benefit of the rich. This impression is altogether false. The free schools of Massachusetts are supported substantially by a tax on property. In most of our towns one fifth of the inhabitants pays more than half of the taxes, and this fifth, as Mr Carter well observes, instead of sending half the scholars of the free schools will rarely send one sixth of them. Two thirds, therefore, of what the rich pay towards these schools is, on a very moderate computation, paid for the education of the children of the poor.

For the rich, indeed, the character and condition of the free schools is, comparatively, a thing of small moment. If the means of teaching, which they want, are not to be found near their own doors, they can easily send their children to another village or to an academy. But the poor man must educate his child at home or nowhere. He cannot afford to pay tuition fees and board; he can hardly, perhaps, be warranted in giving up the labor of the child, which, as it grows older, becomes a part of the subsistence of his family. The law, therefore, which takes away the town's grammar school, stops the poor man's child at the threshold. He can get the first rudiments of knowledge at the reading school; but the next step is gone, and therefore an impassable gulf is left between his present condition, and that to which he could before have so easily attained, and to which, if he loved knowledge, he was in fact directly and strongly solicited.

In providing means for the gradual advancement of all, from the humblest rudiments of knowledge, to some of its best attainments, the city of Boston offers an honorable example, which is the more striking, as it is conducted on so large a scale. The first step there is taken in the primary schools, where *twentysix hundred* children, from the age of four to seven are constantly instructed, by female teachers, in spelling and reading. The next step is in the reading schools, where about *twentyeight hundred* boys and girls, from seven to fourteen, are taught reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, and geography. About one hundred and fifty, from twelve years old and upwards, pursue natural philosophy, geometry, mathematics, French, history, &c. at the High School. And about two hundred and thirty, in the ancient grammar school, are thoroughly carried through the principal Latin and Greek authors, entering at nine or ten and remaining five years. The whole of this arrangement is at once beautiful and practical. No step, no facility is wanting. The poorest boy of the six thousand, who are thus taught by the city, can, without the expense of a dollar, except in books, obtain a thorough education ; and no further comment on the practical influence and operation of this system is necessary, than the simple fact, that the children of the rich are found in these free schools, no less than the children of the poor ; or, in other words, that wealth, in the city of Boston, cannot buy a better education, than is freely given to the poor ; a most honorable example, not only worthy of all imitation throughout a free state, but deserving every form of legislative countenance and support.

But the laws of Massachusetts now do nothing in this great work. On the contrary, by the very humble standard of popular education, which they assume, the people of large towns are invited, and the people of the smaller towns are encouraged, to reduce its tone throughout the commonwealth. The best of what is done, therefore, is done by the people against the spirit of the laws or above their spirit. The community, in fact, insists upon having better means of general instruction than the legislature will even ask. This ought not so to be. The legislature should go before the people, and excite, encourage, and require them gradually, but constantly, to raise the tone of education, to provide more learned

and skilful teachers, and to introduce into the schools higher and higher branches of knowledge, so that by a sure and silent power applied to the very foundations of society, our laws may cooperate with the spirit of the times, to raise up and educate a people, that shall grow purer, happier, and more enlightened with every succeeding generation. Until this be done, the legislature is guilty of an injury to the commonwealth, which is so much the more alarming, as its full extent cannot be known, until it is become irreparable, since measures that touch the moral and intellectual education of the whole community are to take effect in the next generation, rather than the present, and can be finally developed only by the changed character of the entire people. What our ancestors have done for us, by placing us in the midst of a land of schools and churches, we well know and feel. What we shall do for our posterity remains yet to be determined.

ART. XI.—MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES.

1.—*The Canadian Review, and Literary and Historical Journal.*
No. I. July, 1824. pp. 232. Montreal. H. H. Cunningham.

THE first number of a periodical work with the above title has recently made its appearance in Canada. About thirty years ago, when the Duke de la Rochefoucault Laincourt travelled in America, he is said, in the introductory article of this journal, to have affirmed, that ‘throughout all Canada there is no public library except in Quebec, and this is small and consists mostly of French books; no literary society exists in Canada, and not three men are known in the whole country to be engaged in literary pursuits; excepting the *Quebec Almanac*, not a single book is printed in Canada.’ The editors do not deny the accuracy of this assertion, but they speak with just pride of the improvement since the time it was uttered. The progress of letters, if it has been slow, has nevertheless been constant; learning is patronised, and knowledge diffused; libraries are multiplied, and literary attainments are valued, as elevating the character, and conferring distinction. The following facts are curious, as throwing some light on the present state of literature in Canada.